

**STATEMENT OF DANIEL N. WENK, DEPUTY DIRECTOR, NATIONAL PARK SERVICE, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR, BEFORE THE HOUSE SUBCOMMITTEE ON NATIONAL PARKS, FORESTS AND PUBLIC LANDS, OF THE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES, CONCERNING H.R. 1080, TO MODIFY THE BOUNDARIES OF GRAND TETON NATIONAL PARK TO INCLUDE CERTAIN LAND WITHIN THE GT PARK SUBDIVISION, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.**

**MARCH 29, 2007**

---

Mr. Chairman and members of the subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to present the views of the Department of the Interior on H.R. 1080, a bill to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to modify the boundaries of Grand Teton National Park to include certain land within the GT Park Subdivision, and for other purposes.

The Department supports H.R. 1080. An identical Senate bill, S. 277, was reported by the Senate Energy Committee on January 31, 2007. While no hearing was held on this bill, the Department testified in support of a similar bill in the 109<sup>th</sup> Congress.

H.R. 1080 would authorize the Secretary of the Interior (Secretary) to accept, by donation, approximately 49 acres adjacent to Grand Teton National Park, and upon donation, adjust the park boundary to include these lands within the park and to administer the acquired lands in accordance with all applicable laws. In addition, the Secretary would be prohibited from selling, donating, exchanging, or otherwise transferring the acquired land without authorization from Congress. The lands added to the boundary would be donated at no cost to the federal government, and no additional costs would be associated with management or administration of the donated lands. Costs that would be associated with the conveyance of the land include

closing and other associated costs. We estimate those costs to be approximately \$300,000, and we currently do not have a funding source identified for these costs.

The privately owned land that is the subject of H.R. 1080 is located approximately one mile from the major road through the park and is visible from that road. The land consists of eight lots that total 49.67 acres and are located near the Lost Creek Ranch, adjacent to the park's eastern boundary. Similar in character and quality to adjacent park lands, the lots are primarily grassland and sagebrush meadow and provide habitat for a wide variety of wildlife including elk, deer, antelope, bison, coyotes, and wolves. The lots offer spectacular and unobstructed views of the Teton Range across the broad valley of Jackson Hole.

The National Park System includes countless examples of philanthropic efforts that have added immeasurably to the preservation of our Nation's natural and cultural treasures. Nowhere is this more evident than at Grand Teton National Park, where the gift of John D. Rockefeller, Jr. in 1949, of more than 38,000 acres, helped to ensure the creation of the park. Today, the spirit of philanthropy is very much alive at Grand Teton, and a prime example is the extraordinary generosity of Gerald T. Halpin and his family. Of the eight lots which are the subject of this bill, one is owned by the Halpin family, and the other seven were previously donated by the Halpins to several foundations with the understanding that they would ultimately be donated to the federal government for inclusion in Grand Teton National Park. These foundations include the National Park Foundation, the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, and the Grand Teton National Park Foundation.

Inclusion of these lands within Grand Teton National Park cannot be accomplished without this legislation. When Congress established the park in 1950, it included a provision in the park's enabling legislation that prohibited any expansion of national parks or monuments in the State of Wyoming without the express authorization of Congress. This legislation is the product of many generous and forward-looking people working together to continue protecting Grand Teton National Park for the American people.

That concludes my statement. I would be glad to answer any questions that you or other members of the subcommittee might have.